



30 SEP 2005

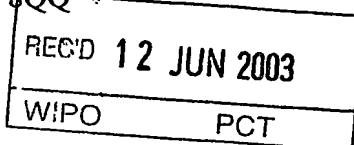


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1. Your reference

02.0013-Sen/P121/GB/AJW

2. Patent application number

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0207594.3

-2 APR 2002

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant *(underline all surnames)*Sendo International Limited  
1601-3 Kinwick Center  
32 Hollywood Road, Central, Hong KongPatents ADP number *(if you know it)*

8203135001

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

Hong Kong

4. Title of the invention

MECHANISM FOR OBTAINING AND PAYING  
FOR POSTAGE5. Name of your agent *(if you have one)*"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent *(including the postcode)*Antony Wray  
INETIP  
121 Blackberry Lane  
Four Marks, Alton  
Hampshire GU34 5DJOPTIMUS  
Grove House,  
Luttrells Close,  
Chineham Court,  
BASINGSTOKE,  
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Number of earlier application

Date of filing  
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Yes

a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or  
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*See note (d)*

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Claim(s)	6 <i>SW</i>
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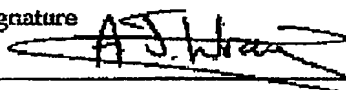
Priority documents

Translations of priority documents

Statement of inventorship and right to grant of a patent (*Patents Form 7/77*)Request for preliminary examination and search (*Patents Form 9/77*)Request for substantive examination (*Patents Form 10/77*)Any other documents  
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11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application.

Signature



Date

02 April 2002

12. Name and daytime telephone number of person to contact in the United Kingdom

Antony Wray

01256 816233

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**DUPLICATE**

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MECHANISM FOR OBTAINING AND PAYING FOR POSTAGE**Field of the Invention**

5 This invention relates to a method for obtaining a code to be used for postage. The invention is applicable to, but not limited to, a method for obtaining and paying for a postage code utilising a wireless communication device such as a mobile phone.

10

**Background of the Invention**

It is known to purchase postage stamps in order to pay for the postage of, for example, a letter. A person  
15 wishing to send a letter by post is required to go to a shop, or the like, to purchase the postage stamp(s). This not only requires the person to travel to the shop, but also limits the person to purchasing the stamp(s) at a time when the shop is open.

20

A known method, which alleviates the above-mentioned problems, has recently been implemented by the German postal service, Deutsche Post, under the name "Stampit" as described at:

25

<http://www.deutschepost.de/brief/stampiten/>.

30

This system provides a method of franking post using a personal computer, or similar appliance, connected to the Internet. A user installs a required software application onto their computer, or similar appliance,

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and registers to use the "Stampit" service. The user also needs to set up a payment method. .

Once the user has registered, the user is able to  
5 purchase postage credit over the Internet, which is subsequently stored in their postage account. Subsequently, when the user wishes to send an item<sup>4</sup> of post, they select the type of postage they require. The computer then connects to the "Stampit" server on the  
10 Internet, and requests a matrix code. The "Stampit" server sends the matrix code back to the computer, which can then be printed onto, for example, an envelope in place of a stamp. The price of the postage is then deducted from the user's credit in their postage account.

15 This method provides the advantage that the user is not required to travel to a shop or the like and purchase postage stamps. Furthermore, the user is able to purchase postage at a time convenient to them, rather  
20 than being limited by the opening times of a shop or the like.

However, the inventor of the present invention has recognised significant limitations with the above method.  
25 In particular, the Deutsche Post system suffers from the drawback that the user is required to have a computer, or similar appliance, that is capable of connecting to the Internet. It also requires the user to provide payment information over the Internet, and that account details  
30 of the user are stored on the Internet. Furthermore, the method suffers from the requirement to set up accounts

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from which postage is paid and purchasing significant amounts of postage credit to justify supporting the "Stampit" service.

- 5 However, it is envisaged by the inventor of the present invention that an individual is more likely to spend substantially smaller amounts of money on postage. Notably, such small amounts would not justify the setting up of a "Stampit" account. As a consequence, the
- 10 inventor of the present invention envisages that the Deutsche Post "Stampit" system will rarely be utilised by individual users or small groups.

- Thus, a need exists for an improved method for obtaining
- 15 and paying for postage, particularly for individuals or small groups, wherein the abovementioned disadvantages may be alleviated.

#### Statement of Invention

20

In accordance with a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a method for obtaining a postage verification code, as claimed in Claim 1.

- 25 In accordance with a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided wireless communication device, as claimed in Claim 11

- In accordance with a third aspect of the present
- 30 invention, there is provided a Postal server, as claimed in Claim 13.

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In accordance with a fourth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions, as claimed in Claim 14.

In accordance with a fifth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a Postal server, as claimed in Claim 15.

In accordance with a sixth aspect of the present invention, there is provided a Postal sorting machine, as claimed in Claim 19.

Further aspects of the present invention are as defined in the dependent Claims.

In summary, a mechanism, corresponding apparatus and method for obtaining and paying for a postage verification code are described. Preferably, a wireless communication device, such as a mobile phone, is used in the process. By using a wireless communication device and wireless communication network, payment information for postage verification codes do not need to be communicated. The postage charges can be added to, say, a monthly bill for the user's wireless communication device.

#### Brief Description of the Drawings

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Exemplary embodiments of the present invention will now be described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

5 Figure 1 illustrates a wireless communication system adapted to support the inventive concepts of the preferred embodiments of the present invention,

Figure 2 illustrates a flow diagram of a process for a  
10 user to obtain a postage verification code in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention, and

Figure 3 illustrates the postal server of figure 1 in  
15 more detail, in accordance with the preferred embodiment of the present invention.

#### Description of Preferred Embodiments

20 In summary, the present invention proposes a method and associated apparatus for obtaining a postage verification code, the method and associated apparatus being described utilising a communication device, such as a mobile phone. The preferred embodiment of the present invention is  
25 described with reference to a portable cellular phone capable of operating in, for example, current and/or future generations of wireless cellular technology. However, it is within the contemplation of the present invention that the inventive concepts described herein  
30 are equally applicable to any other fixed or wireless communication device, such as a personal data assistant



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(PDA), a portable or mobile radio, a laptop computer or a wirelessly networked personal computer (PC) or indeed any other wireless communication device that a mobile user may possess whilst wishing to remotely obtain a postage  
5 code/stamp.

Figure 1 illustrates a preferred arrangement 100 for implementing the present invention. A postal server 110 is capable of generating postage verification codes. The  
10 postage verification codes are preferably generated upon request from, for example, an individual wishing to post an item such as a letter. Such an individual wirelessly transmits a postage verification code request message from a mobile communications device, which for the  
15 illustrated embodiment is in the form of a mobile phone 120, to a postal server 110.

Such a wireless request message may be made in any appropriate manner. For example, and as illustrated, the  
20 user of a mobile phone 120 may wirelessly transmit such a request message by way of a Short Message Service (SMS) message sent to a Postal Server's telephone number via a Global System for Mobile communications (GSM) network (not shown). For other wireless communication devices  
25 any other communication link, provided between the mobile phone 120 and the postal server 110, may be used.

The GSM Short Message Service is defined in the following sections of the GSM specification:

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GSM 03.40: Digital cellular telecommunications system; Technical realization of the Short Message Service (SMS); Point-to-Point (PP); and

- 5 GSM 04.11: Digital cellular telecommunications system; Point-to-Point (PP) Short Message Service (SMS) support on mobile radio interface.

10 The wireless request message may alternatively be sent using any other appropriate means available, for example using the GSM Unstructured Supplementary Service Data mechanism, defined in the GSM standard in the documents GSM 02.90 (USSD Stage 1) and GSM 03.90 (USSD Stage 2).

- 15 The wireless request message preferably includes information relating to the type of postage required by the user. For example, such information may include at least one or more of the following:

- 20 (i) The price of the postage required;  
(ii) The weight of the letter/parcel to be posted;  
(iii) The class of postage (e.g. in the United Kingdom 1<sup>st</sup> class or 2<sup>nd</sup> class); and/or  
(iv) An indication of the destination (e.g. post/zip code) of the letter/parcel to be posted.

25

Alternatively, the postal server 110 may include a number of telephone numbers, where each number corresponds to a price, class, etc. of postage. Thus, by selecting the appropriate telephone number to send the wireless request message to, the user correspondingly selects the type of postage that the user requires.

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It is envisaged that the wireless request message may further include information identifying the user. For example, such information may include at least one or  
5 more of the following:

- (i) The name of the user;
- (ii) The mobile telephone number of the user;
- (iii) The International Mobile Subscriber  
Identification (IMSI) number of the Subscriber Identity  
10 Module (SIM) of the user; and/or
- (iv) The International Mobile Equipment  
Identification (IMEI) number of the mobile phone 120.

It is further envisaged that such information identifying  
15 the user may be provided within the data of the request message transmitted by the mobile phone 120 to the postal server 110. Alternatively, the information may be included within the structure of the message, for example within a section of a header of the request message.

20

On receipt of the request message, the postal server 110 extracts from the message the information relating to the type of postage required by the user. Alternatively, where the telephone number to which the message is sent  
25 defines the type of postage required, the postal server 110 ascertains the type of postage required. The postal server 110 preferably also identifies the identity of the user, at this time, so that appropriate postal charges can be added to, say, the user's monthly mobile phone  
30 bill.

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Preferably, the information relating to the identity of the user includes the mobile telephone number of the user. However, where such information includes the IMSI, IMEI and/or name of the user, the postal server uses such  
5 information to obtain the mobile telephone number of the user.

Where it is necessary for the postal server 110 to obtain the mobile telephone number of the user, this may be  
10 performed in any available manner. For example, the user may have pre-registered with the postal server 110, providing details such as name, mobile telephone number, IMEI, IMSI etc. Alternatively, the postal server 110 may have access to one or more databases from which the  
15 postal server 110 is able to obtain the mobile telephone number of the user from the name, IMEI and/or IMSI of the user. Such databases may be provided by network operators, one of which the user is subscribed with, or any other third party. Such databases may even be  
20 maintained by the administrator of the postal server 110 itself, the data for which can be obtained from network operators, etc.

Having obtained/ascertained the type of postage required,  
25 and the mobile telephone number of the user, the postal server 110 generates a postage verification code, which it sends back to the mobile phone 120 of the user, for example by any suitable mechanism such as a SMS or a USSD message.

30

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On receipt of the postage verification code, the mobile phone 120 may display, or otherwise provide to the user, the postage verification code. The user is then able to write, print or otherwise apply/affix the code to the envelope or external surface of the letter/parcel to be posted, in place of a traditional stamp.

The postage verification code generated by the postal server 110 is preferably generated using information obtained from the wireless request received from the user. For example, in a preferred embodiment, the request from the user contains the destination post/zip code of the letter/parcel. The postal server 110, for example utilising an encoding algorithm, uses the addressee's postcode, and perhaps the sender's identifier, to generate a request-specific postage verification code. Other relevant information may also be used in generating the postage verification code, such as the date and/or time of the request, the mobile telephone number of the user, etc. By using such information, the postage verification code generated may be unique for each request.

Preferably, the generated code includes a string of alphanumeric characters, which to the user is meaningless, the information being used to generate it not being apparent to the user. This reduces the likelihood of a person attempting to randomly generate/forged postage verification codes.

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It is within the contemplation of the invention that a microprocessor of the mobile phone 120 (or other wireless communication device) may be re-programmed with an algorithm (such as that described with respect to FIG. 2) supporting the inventive concepts of the present invention, as described above. Furthermore, it is envisaged that wireless postage payment data, such as optional telephone numbers to obtain a particular price, class of postage, may be input to a memory element associated with the microprocessor. More generally, according to the preferred embodiment of the present invention, such re-programming to facilitate a request and reception of a postage code, may be implemented in a respective mobile phone 120 (or other wireless communication device) in any suitable manner. For example, a new memory chip or processor may be added to a conventional mobile phone 120 (or other wireless communication device). As such, the required adaptation may be implemented in the form of processor-implementable instructions stored on a storage medium, such as a floppy disk, hard disk, programmable read only memory (PROM), random access memory (RAM) or any combination of these or other storage media. Alternatively, such a re-programming operation may be achieved using over-the-air-reprogramming (OTAR) of the mobile phone 120.

Figure 2 is a flow diagram of a preferred process 200 for a user to obtain wirelessly a postage verification code. The user initiates the process, in step 210, by sending, for example, an SMS message to the postal server. The message contains a request for a postage verification

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code. The message preferably also contains the destination post/zip code and any information that may be required by the postal server to generate the postage verification code. The mobile telephone number of the user is preferably also included in the request message, for example within the structure of the message, such as in a part of the header of the message.

In step 220 of the process, the postal server receives the request message. The required information, preferably including the mobile telephone number of the user, is extracted from the message. The postal server in the next step 230, using the information extracted from the request message, then generates the postage verification code.

Next, the postal server sends an SMS message back to the mobile phone 120 of the user, as shown in step 240. Advantageously, an identification of the mobile phone 120 or the user of the mobile phone 120 has been ascertained such that a charge associated with the postage verification code can be attributed to the mobile phone 120.

The message transmitted to the mobile phone 120 contains the requested postage verification code. In the next step 250, this message is received by the mobile phone 120 of the user and displayed, or otherwise provided, to the user. In the final step 260, the user, writes, prints or otherwise applies/affixes the postage

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verification code to the item, such as a letter/parcel,  
to be posted.

Figure 3 illustrates the postal server 110 of figure 1 in  
5 more detail. The postal server 110 comprises an  
interface port 320, through which the postal server is  
capable of sending and receiving information and messages  
via, for example, the Internet 140. The postal server  
110 further includes a decoder 330 that decodes the  
10 wireless message requesting a postage verification code.  
The decoder 330 preferably includes a buffer 340, which  
for the illustrated embodiment is a first-in first-out  
(FIFO) buffer, to co-ordinate multiple received requests  
in a controlled manner. The postal server 110 further  
15 includes an encoding software application 350 to generate  
the postage verification codes, preferably operably  
coupled to a database 360, for use in subsequently  
validating postage verification codes applied to posted  
items.

20

Also connected to, or forming a part of, the Internet 140  
is an SMS interface server 370, which is connected to a  
mobile communication network such as a GSM network 380.  
When a user sends a request for a postage verification  
25 code using an SMS message, the message is transmitted  
over the GSM network 380 to the SMS interface server 370.  
The SMS interface server 370 converts the SMS message  
into a hypertext mark-up language (HTML) format message  
and transmits the message, via the Internet 140, to the  
30 postal server 110.



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The HTML format message is received by the postal server 110 at interface port 320, which takes the message, decodes it in decoder 330 and stores it in the buffer 340. The message is then read by the encoding software application 350 and the required information extracted. The encoding software application 350 then generates a substantially unique postage verification code. The encoding software application 350 subsequently creates an HTML format message containing the postage verification code and transmits the code, via the interface port 320, over the Internet 140 to the SMS Interface Server 370. The encoding software application 350 also preferably stores the postage verification code in the database 360. Furthermore, it is envisaged that the encoding software application 350 may also store the information extracted from the request message and the mobile telephone number of the user in the database.

It is within the contemplation of the invention that the functionality of the encoding software application 350 may be implemented in hardware, software or firmware, dependent upon the particular constraints or design of the Postal Server 110.

Although for the illustrated embodiment the database 360 is provided as a part of the postal server 110, it will be appreciated that the database 360 may be provided remote from the postal server 110, being hosted by, for example, a different server. In this scenario, the postage verification code and any associated data is sent to the host of the database 360 via the Internet 140, or

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via any other suitable alternative means, where it is stored in the database.

5 The SMS interface server 370 converts the HTML message to an SMS message, and transmits it over the GSM network 380 back to the user of the mobile phone 120, using the mobile telephone number of the user provided in the HTML message from the postal server 110. On receipt and decoding of the SMS message, the mobile phone 120  
10 displays, or otherwise provides, the postage verification code to the user. The user may then subsequently apply the postage verification code, in an appropriate manner, to the outside of the letter/parcel to be posted.

15 When the user subsequently posts the letter/parcel, for example at a post box or Post Office, with the postage verification code written, printed or otherwise applied to the outside of the letter/parcel, the letter/parcel is transferred to a sorting office of the postal service.  
20 At the sorting office, as with conventional letters/parcels, the destination address, including the post/zip code of the letter/parcel, is read by automated sorting machines capable of reading alphanumeric characters provided on the outside of letters and  
25 parcels.

For the present invention, the postage verification code is also read, and checked for validity. Each postage verification code read from a letter/parcel is decoded,  
30 for example using a decoding algorithm, and the information used to create the code is obtained. As

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mentioned above, such information preferably includes the  
postcode of the destination address of the letter/parcel.  
Further information may include: the date and/or time of  
the request for the postage verification code, the mobile  
5 telephone number of the user, etc.

This information can then be used to ascertain whether  
the code is valid. For example, the postcode is compared  
to that read from the letter/parcel to ensure that they  
10 are the same. Where the date and/or time of the request  
for the postage verification code are used, each postage  
verification code can be provided with a valid time  
period in which they may be used, and so if this time  
period has expired the postage verification code is no  
15 longer valid.

In an alternative embodiment, the sorting machine used to  
read and check the validity of the postage verification  
code is capable of communication with the Postal server  
20 110. Having read the postage verification code, the  
sorting machine sends the postage verification code to  
the postal server 110, where it is compared to those  
stored in the database 360. It will be appreciated that,  
if the database is not located at the postal server 110,  
25 the sorting machine will alternatively/additionally be  
capable of communication with the host of the database  
360, and sends the postage verification code to the host  
of the database 360 to confirm that it is a valid code.

30 The host of the database 360, whether this is the postal  
server 110 or not, compares the postage verification code

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received from the sorting machine to those stored in the database. If the postage verification code received from the sorting machine matches a valid code stored in the database, the host of the database 360 informs the  
5 sorting machine that the code is valid. The host may then delete the corresponding code from the database 360, or change a characteristic associated with that code to indicate that it has been used, and therefore any future uses of the code are invalid.

10 Where a postage verification code is deemed invalid, the letter/parcel to which it has been applied can be treated as if postage has not been paid (i.e. as if no stamp has been affixed to the letter/parcel).

15 In general, the SMS interface server 370 will be provided, and maintained, by the relevant network operator of the GSM network 380. Therefore, the HTML message sent to the SMS interface server 370 by the  
20 postal server 110 may include the amount that the user is to be charged for the postage. The SMS interface server 370 can then extract this information from the message before converting the HTML message into an SMS message. Notably, the present invention resolves the problem of  
25 financial information being sent over the Internet by including the postage to be charged to the user in the user's mobile telephone bill. Alternatively, for pre-paid mobile phone account holders, the charge may be attributed to the mobile phone account by deducting an  
30 appropriate amount for the postage verification code from the user's account.

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Referring back to Figure 1, it can be seen that the present invention is not limited to the user requesting a postage verification code by way of an SMS request  
5 message. Any alternative means or message format of wirelessly requesting a postage verification code may be utilised. For example, assuming that the wireless user has a web-enabled wireless communication device, the wireless user may connect to the postal server 110 via  
10 the Internet 140, for example by accessing a website hosted by the postal server 110. Using the website, the wireless user provides the information required by the postal server 110 as well as the mobile telephone number of the user. The postal server 110 can then generate the  
15 postage verification code, and send it, for example, by SMS to the mobile phone 120 of the user. In a similar manner, the postal server 110 may host a wireless application protocol (WAP) site, which the user is able to access, for example, using a user's WAP-enabled mobile  
20 phone.

In a further example, the user is able to connect to the postal server 110 using a fixed wireline telephone, for example over a public switched telephone network (PSTN).  
25 The user can provide the postal server 110 with the required information in any suitable manner, for example using dual tone multi-frequency (DTMF) signals, voice recognition software provided by the postal server 110 or by speaking to an operator. In this context, it is  
30 envisaged that a charge associated with the postage verification code received over the PSTN can be

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attributed/charged to the user's fixed-line phone bill.  
It will be appreciated that the user using their mobile  
phone 120 could also achieve this.

- 5 It will be understood that the method for wirelessly  
obtaining a postage verification code, Postal server,  
wireless communication device and corresponding postal  
sorting machine, as described above, provides at least  
the following advantages:

10 :

- (i) The user is provided with the ability to  
wirelessly request and receive postage verification codes  
at anytime, and from anywhere, so long as the user is  
able to connect to a wireless communication network, such  
15 as a GSM network, using a mobile phone, or similar  
wireless communication device.

- (ii) The user is not restricted by requiring access  
to the Internet, a problem suffered by the Deutsch Post  
Stampit system.

- 20 (iii) The user is not required to divulge  
payment/account information over the Internet, thereby  
resolving another problem suffered by the Deutsch Post  
Stampit method.

- (iv) The user is also not required to pre-pay for  
25 postage, thereby benefiting a user who infrequently sends  
post or sends small amounts of post.

Whilst the specific and preferred implementations of the  
embodiments of the present invention are described above,  
30 it is clear that one skilled in the art could readily

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apply variations and modifications that would still  
employ the aforementioned inventive concepts.

Thus, a method for wirelessly obtaining a postage  
5 verification code, a Postal server, a wireless  
communication device and a corresponding postal sorting  
machine have been described where the aforementioned  
disadvantages with prior art arrangements have been  
substantially alleviated.

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**Claims**

1. A method for obtaining a postage verification code, the method comprising the steps of:
  - 5 transmitting a request for a postage verification code from a communication device to a Postal server;
  - receiving said request at said Postal server;
  - generating a postage verification code in response to said request;
  - 10 transmitting a postage verification code to said communication device, such that a charge associated with said postage verification code is attributed to said communication device; and
  - receiving said postage verification code at said
  - 15 communication device.
2. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 1, wherein said request and/or said postage verification code are transmitted wirelessly
  - 20 between said Postal server and a wireless communication device, the method further comprising the steps of:
  - providing said postage verification code to a user of said wireless communication device; and
  - applying said postage verification code on an
  - 25 item for posting.
3. The method for wirelessly obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 1 or Claim 2, wherein the step of transmitting a request includes
  - 30 transmitting information relating to a type of postage required by a user of said communication device.



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4. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 3, wherein said information relating to a type of postage includes one or more of the following:

- (i) A price of postage required;
- (ii) A weight of said item to be posted;
- (iii) A class of postage;
- (iv) An indication of a destination for said item to be posted.

5. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to any of preceding Claims 3 or 4, wherein the step of transmitting a request includes transmitting a request to an address that corresponds to said type of postage.

6. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to any preceding Claim, wherein the step of transmitting a request includes transmitting information identifying a user of said communication device.

7. The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to Claim 6, wherein said information identifying a user of said communication device includes one or more of the following:

- (i) A name of the user;
- (ii) A number associated with a wireless communication device of the user;

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(iii) An International Mobile Subscriber Identification (IMSI) number of the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) of the user;

- 5       \*(iv) An International Mobile Equipment Identification (IMEI) number of the wireless communication device.

8.       The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to any preceding Claim, wherein the  
10       postage verification code is generated based on information contained in the request, for example a destination post/zip code..

9.       The method for obtaining a postage verification  
15       code according to any of preceding Claims 2 to 8, the method further comprising the step of:

          verifying said postage verification code applied to said item at a sorting office.

- 20       10.       The method for obtaining a postage verification code according to any preceding of preceding Claims 2 to 9, wherein the step of transmitting a wireless request includes:

- transmitting a wireless request using a GSM  
25       unstructured supplementary service data message; or  
          transmitting a wireless request using a GSM short message service message; or  
          accessing a website hosted by the postal server.

- 30       11.       A wireless communication device adapted to perform method steps of any of Claims 1 to 10.

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12. The wireless communication device according to claim 11, wherein the wireless communication device is one of:

5 a cellular phone, a portable or mobile radio, a personal digital assistant, a laptop computer, a wirelessly networked PC.

13. A Postal server adapted to perform method steps  
10 of any of Claims 1 to 10.

14. A storage medium storing processor-implementable instructions for controlling one or more processors to carry out the method of any of claims 1 to 10.

15

15. A postal server comprising:

an interface port, through which the postal server is capable of sending and receiving postage verification code messages or requests;

20 a decoder for receiving a request for a postage verification code from a communication device;

an encoding software application to generate and send a postage verification code to said communication device, in response to said request, such that a charge  
25 associated with said postage verification code is attributed to said communication device.

16. The postal server according to Claim 15, wherein the encoding software application generates a postage  
30 verification code based on a type of postage requested,

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for example, based on information relating to one or more of the following:

- (i) A price of postage required;
- (ii) A weight of said item to be posted;
- 5 (iii) A class of postage;
- (iv) An indication of a destination for said item to be posted;
- (v) A destination postcode.

10 17. The postal server according to Claim 15 or Claim 16, wherein the encoding software application generates a postage verification code based on information identifying a user of a wireless communication device or a wireless communication device making said request, for  
15 example, based on information relating to one or more of the following:

- (i) A name of the user;
- (ii) A mobile telephone number of the user;
- (iii) An International Mobile Subscriber
- 20 Identification (IMSI) number of the Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) of the user;
- (iv) An International Mobile Equipment Identification (IMEI) number of the wireless communication device.

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18. The postal server according to Claim 15, Claim 16 or Claim 17, the postal server further comprising a database, operably coupled to said encoding software application for maintaining a record of the generated  
30 postage verification code, such that the record can be

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used to validate postage of an item bearing the postage verification code.

19. A Postal Sorting machine adapted to verify said  
5 postage verification code applied to an item in  
accordance with the method steps of any of Claims 1 to  
10, or the postal server of Claims 15 to 18.

20. A method for wirelessly obtaining a postage  
10 verification code substantially as hereinbefore described  
with reference to, and/or as illustrated by, FIG. 2 of  
the accompanying drawings.

21. A postage verification code delivery mechanism  
15 substantially as hereinbefore described with reference  
to, and/or as illustrated by, FIG. 3 of the accompanying  
drawings.

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MECHANISM FOR OBTAINING AND PAYING FOR POSTAGE**Abstract**

5 A method for obtaining a postage verification code includes the steps of transmitting a request for a postage verification code from a communication device to, and receiving the request at, a Postal server. The Postal server generates and sends a postage verification  
10 code to the communication device, in response to the request, such that a charge associated with said postage verification code is attributed to said communication device. The communication device receives the postage verification code for subsequent applying to an item to  
15 be posted.

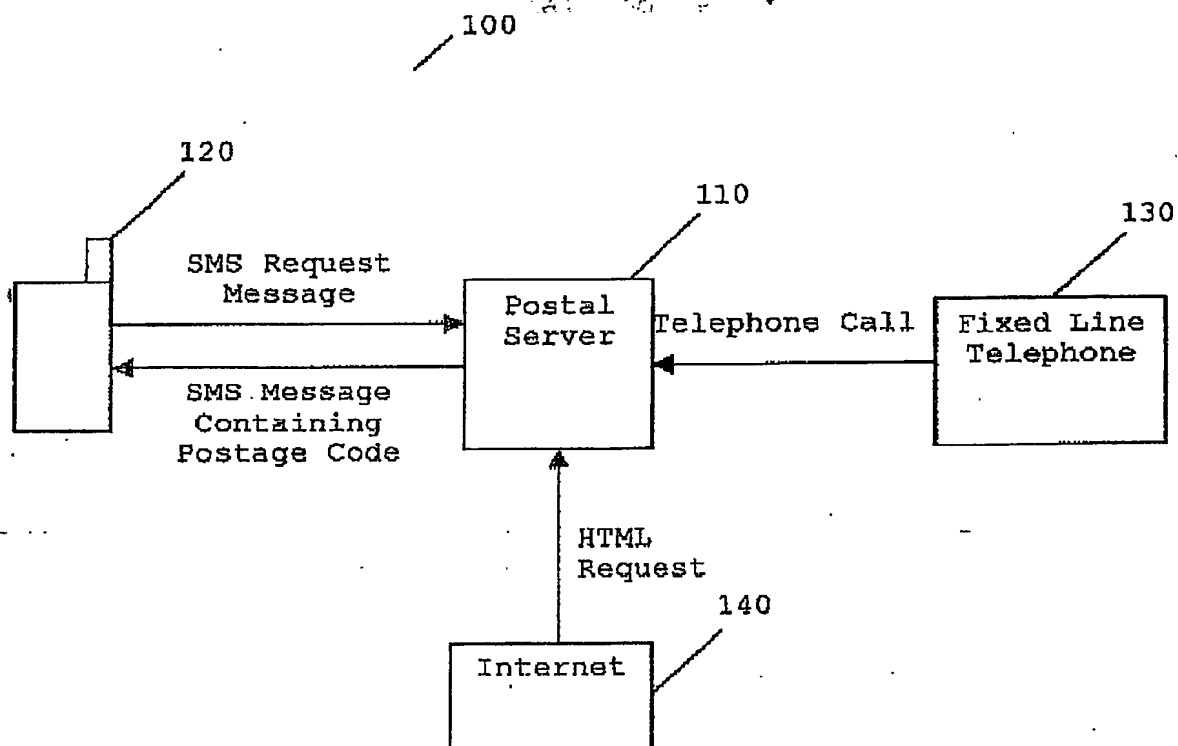
In this manner, a user of say, a wireless communication device is provided with the ability to wirelessly request and receive postage verification codes at anytime, and  
20 from anywhere, so long as the user is able to connect to a wireless communication network, such as a GSM network, using a mobile phone, or similar wireless communication device. In particular, the user can be billed for the postage verification code via the user's wireless  
25 communication device account.

{FIG. 3 to accompany abstract}

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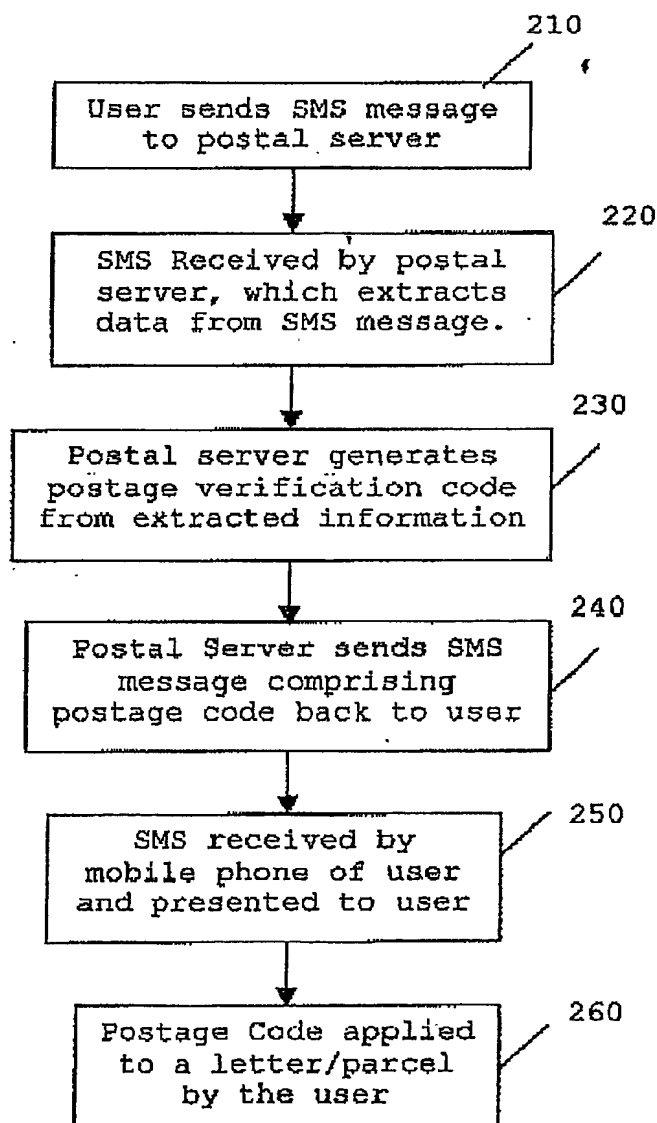
FIG. 1



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FIG. 2

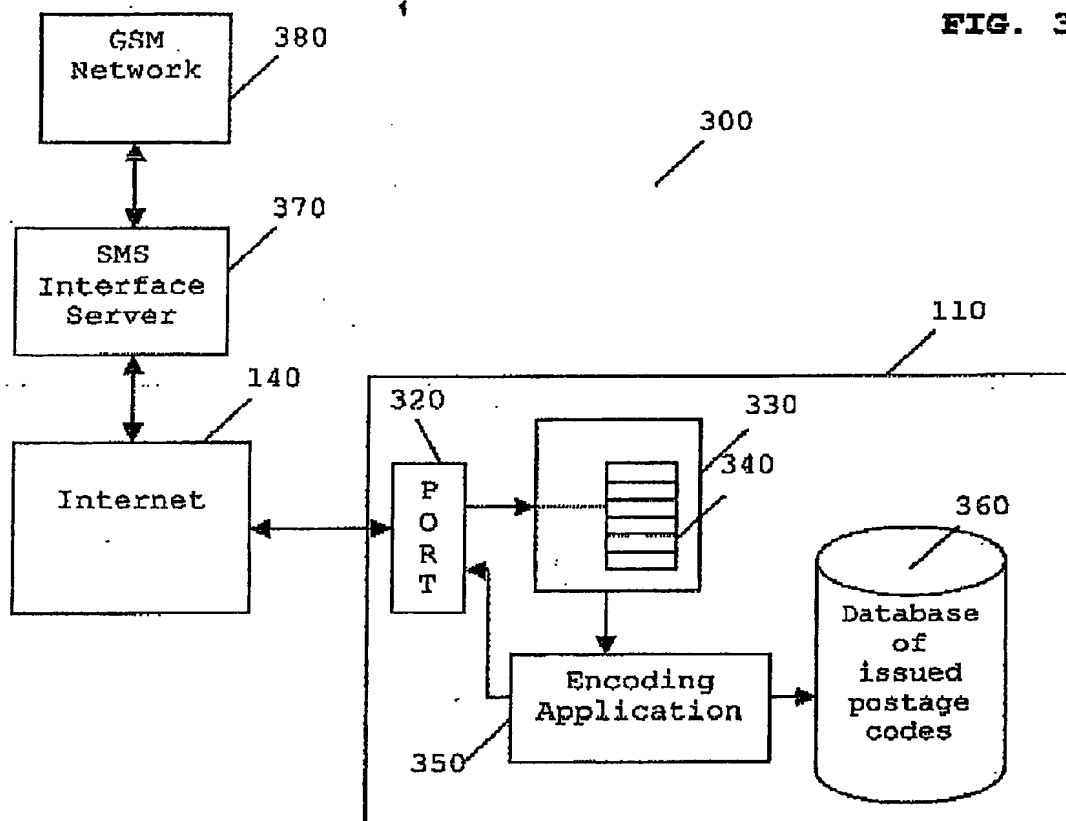




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FIG. 3



TIVOLI OFFICE  
22 MAY 2003  
Tivoli Parents  
Tivoli Unit

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